



ESSENTIAL ENGLISH GRAMMAR

Conform To The New Program



CONTENTS

- Articles
- The gerund
- Prepositions
- Conjunctions and Linking words
- Giving advice
- Quantifiers
- Expressing wishes and regrets
- The subjunctive



ARTICLES

"A, An, The" definite and indefinite articles in English
Here are the rules for when to use "A, An or The":

- **a** = indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with consonants

She has **a** dog.

I work in **a** factory.

- **an** = indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with vowels (a, e, i, o, u)

Can I have **an** apple?

She is **an** English teacher.

- **the** = definite article (a specific object that both the person speaking and the listener know)

The car over there is fast.

The teacher is very good, isn't he?

- The first time you speak of something use "a or an", the next time you repeat that object use "the".

I live in **a** house. **The** house is quite old and has four bedrooms.

I ate in **a** Chinese restaurant. **The** restaurant was very good.

- DO NOT use an article with countries, states, counties or provinces, lakes and mountains except when the country is a collection of states such as "The United States".

He lives in Washington near Mount Rainier.

They live in northern British Columbia.

It + be + adjective: desirable/ important/ essential/imperative/vital/etc

In all of these examples below with **should**, you can substitute the subjunctive if you want to make it sound more formal or the present simple tense if you want it to be less formal:

- It is **essential** (that) you **should be given** your medication by a properly qualified nurse. (Or: be given, or are given.)

- For the future well-being of the company, it is **imperative** (that) he **should resign** now. (Or: **resign**, or **resigns**.)

- It is **desirable** (that) he **should be retained** in custody, rather than released on bail. (Or: **be retained**, or **is retained**.)

- It is **vital** (that) he **should receive** some treatment (or **receive**, or **receives**) whether he **be** (or **is**) innocent or guilty of this particular crime.

suggest / recommend / insist / demand

Similarly with these reporting verbs, we can use **should**, the subjunctive or the normal tense in the that-clause, depending on whether it is appropriate to sound formal or not:

- The government tried to **insist** (that) all firearms **should be** handed in without delay. (Or: be handed in, or are handed in.)

- The doctors **have recommended** (that) he **should remain** in hospital for a further three weeks. (Or: remain, or remains.)

- I **suggested** he **should leave** right now. (Or: leave, or leaves.)

advise / ask / command / instruct / request / require/warn

Note that these reporting verbs do not require **should** or a that-clause and are normally used instead with a simple infinitive. The issue of whether to use the subjunctive or not with these verbs does not then arise.

- Her mother **advised** them to be home by ten o'clock.

- They **required** me to clean the house every Saturday.

- You **asked** me to let you know how much

it would cost.

- I **warned** him not to swim where there were dangerous currents.

Were is also a kind of subjunctive when it is used with I and **he/she/it** instead of **was** with wish and if. If we use the more natural **was**, it will sound more informal.

- I wish I **were** (or **was**) home now.

- I wish it **were** (or **was**) the weekend.

- If I **were** (or **was**) you, I'd get in touch with Veronica before she leaves for Australia

- If I **were** (or **was**) still living with John, I'd be much better off, but I wouldn't be so independent.

Fixed expressions with the subjunctive

There are a number of fixed expressions which require the subjunctive, including:

Bless you. (Which means: May God bless you.)

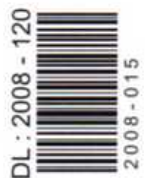
Long live our gracious Queen. (The first line of the British National Anthem)

A toast now: **long live** the bride and groom.

I have always supported you financially, but **be that as it may**, I can no longer support your current lifestyle.

If I have to pretend that you no longer exist, **so be it.**

Be that as it may means **whether that is the case or not** So **be it** means **nothing can or will be done to change that.**



EXPRESSING WISHES

We can use "wish" to show that we want a situation to be different. The verb after "wish" is one tense back, so that if you are wishing for a different present situation, the tense that follows "wish" is past simple or past continuous. If you are wishing that a past situation was different, the tense that comes after "wish" is past perfect. You can also use "wish" with modal verbs.

Wish and present situations

Situation: I haven't got any money... (Verb "have" in the present simple)

Wish: I **wish** I **had** some money (Verb "have" in past simple)

Situation: I **am going** to London next week. (Verb "to go" in present continuous)

Wish: "I **wish** I **wasn't going** to London next week." (Verb "to go" in past continuous)

Situation: I **haven't studied** for the test. (Verb "to study" in present perfect)

Wish: "I **wish** I **had studied** for the test." (Verb "to study" in past perfect)



Wish with modal verbs

With **could** to refer to ability

Situation: I **can't** play a musical instrument.

Wish: "I wish I **could** play a musical instrument."

Wish and past situations

Situation: I **didn't go** on holiday this year. (Verb "to go" is in past simple)

Wish: "I wish I **had gone** on holiday this year. (Verb "to go" is in past perfect.)

With would to refer to habits and free will

there is another structure that you use to talk about actions that take place in the present, but you want them to change in the future. This structure is used to talk about another person, and generally about things you don't like. The structure is **wish** + **would/could** + **infinitive**. For example:

Situation: you **phone** me so early in the morning

Wish: I **wish** you **wouldn't phone** me so early in the morning.

THE SUBJUNCTIVE

The **subjunctive** is used to express intention or proposal about the future. It requires use of the verb in its basic form rather than its normal tense form.

We don't use the **subjunctive** very much in contemporary English unless we wish to sound very formal. With verbs like **suggest, recommend, insist** and adjectives like **important, essential, imperative, crucial, vital**, we often use **should** + **infinitive** instead of the subjunc-

tive or we can use the normal tense form. The reporting verbs and adjectives above are normally followed by a **that**-clause in which **that** itself is often omitted. Compare the following:

- The doctor **recommended** (that) he should give up smoking.
- The doctor **recommended** (that) he give up smoking. (More formal)
- The doctor **recommended** (that) he gives up smoking. (Less formal)

- Use an article with bodies of water, oceans and seas -
My country borders on **the** Pacific Ocean
- DO NOT use an article when you are speaking about things in general
I like Russian tea.
- She likes reading books.
- DO NOT use an article when you are speaking about Meals, places, and transport
He has breakfast at home.
I go to university.
He comes to work by taxi.

THE GERUND

FORM AND USE :

The gerund has the same form as the present participle of a verb : (verb + ing)

Ex: watch + ing = watching

Present participle: I am watching TV.

Gerund : watching tv is fun.

Gerund can be used as nouns, subject, or object in a sentence; after prepositions and after certain verbs.

- as the subject of the sentence:

Watching TV is fun.

- as the complement of the verb 'to be':

My favourite hobby **is skiing**

- After prepositions. The gerund must be used when a verb comes after a preposition:

*These verbs are commonly followed by gerunds.



| | | | | | |
|----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| admit | advise | anticipate | appreciate | attempt | avoid |
| begin | can't help | complete | consider | delay | deny |
| discuss | dislike | enjoy | finish | forget | go |
| hate | hesitate | imagine | intend | keep | like |
| love | mention | mind | miss | neglect | postpone |
| practice | prefer | quit | recall | recollect | recommend |
| regret | remember | resent | resist | risk | start |
| stop | suggest | threaten | tolerate | try | understand |

PREPOSITIONS

1. at/in/on - prepositions of time and place

The prepositions **at**, **in** and **on** are often used in English to talk about places (positions) and times. Sometimes the choice of one over another in a particular phrase or sentence seems arbitrary. However if we analyse patterns of occurrence we can identify key concepts in meaning and usage which consistently apply and can be used as a platform for learning.

1. Prepositions of time

The preposition **at** is used in the following descriptions of time:

- **With clock times:**

My last train leaves **at** 10:30.

We left **at** midnight.

The meeting starts **at** two thirty.

GIVING ADVICE

There are several different structures that you can use when giving **advice**

• Should:

This is probably the most common of the structures for giving advice. After **should**, and its negative - **shouldn't** - we use **the base form of the infinitive of the verb**:

You **should** wise up

We **shouldn't** cheat

It is common to use 'I think' and 'I don't think' with should:

I **think** you **should** put the answers back

She **doesn't think** they **should** use them

• Had better :

This structure is common in spoken English and it is usually used in **the contracted form**. After **had better**, and its negative - **had better not**, we use **the base form of the infinitive of the verb**.

You'd **better return** the answers to the lecturer.



You'd **better not tell** anyone that you found them

• If I were you

This version of the second conditional is often used when giving advice, especially in spoken English. Note the use of **were** with I in the first clause.

In the second clause, we use **would** - contracted to **d** - and **wouldn't**.

After **would** and **wouldn't**, we use **the base form of the infinitive of the verb**:

If I **were** you, I'd give them **back** to the lecturer

If I **were** you, I **wouldn't** use the answers

• Ought

This is the most formal of the structures used for giving advice, and so it isn't so common.

After **ought**, and its negative - **ought not** (oughtn't), we use **the full infinitive of the verb**:

You **ought to contact** the police

You **ought not to cheat** in exams

QUANTIFIERS

Adjectives and adjectival phrases that describe quantity are shown below. Some can only go with countable nouns (friends, cups, people), and some can only go with uncountable nouns (sugar, tea, money, advice). The words in the middle column can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

| COUNT NOUNS ONLY | | COUNT OR NONCOUNT NOUNS | NONCOUNT NOUNS ONLY |
|------------------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| each | a dozen | all | much |
| every | fewer | most | a great deal of |
| neither | several | more | less |
| [no] | a few | a lot/lots of | a little / little |
| | few | plenty of | |
| both | a couple (of) | some / any | |
| many | | no | |
| a number of | | none | |
| hundreds of | | | |

Examples: All the people in the room were silent.
Both children were born in Italy.
Half (of) his books were in French.
How much money have you got?
How many cigarettes have you smoked?

I've got a lot of work this week.
There were a lot of people at the concert.
I've got a few friends
I've got a little money

We are going to the cinema **and** spending an evening at the opera. **Coordinating conjunction**

After going to the cinema, we are spending an evening at the opera. **Subordinating conjunction**

The lending library closes at 7pm, **but** the reading rooms stay open until 9pm. **Coordinating conjunction.**

Whereas the lending library closes at 7pm, the reading rooms stay open until 9pm. **Subordinating conjunction**

The following are common **subordinating conjunctions**:-

Time: after, before, when, while, since, until,

Contrast, Concession, Alternatives: although, though, even if, despite, in spite of, whereas, while

Reason: because, due to, in view of the fact that, since

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Time <ul style="list-style-type: none">afterafter whichandasas long asas soon asat which (point)beforeby the timehardly*no sooner*now (that)oncesincethe momentthentilluntilwhenwheneverwhereuponwhile | Result <ul style="list-style-type: none">consequentlyhenceandthusthereforeand soelseor elseotherwisesoso thatas a result/consequence Contrast, Concession, Alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none">althoughapart frombutdespiteeven ifeven thoughexcept thatin spite oformuch asnornot thatthoughwhereaswhilewhilstyet | Reason <ul style="list-style-type: none">asas a result ofbecausebecause ofconsideringdue toforgiven thatin casein view of the factthatjust in caseon account ofseeing as/thatsince Addition <ul style="list-style-type: none">andas well asbesidesbesides whichin addition tonot only Giving examples <ul style="list-style-type: none">for instancefor examplein particular showing how to conclude your thoughts <ul style="list-style-type: none">to concludein briefto sum up brieflyto summarizein conclusion | Conditional <ul style="list-style-type: none">as long aseven ififone conditionthatprovided (that)providing (that)so long asunlesswhether... or Manner <ul style="list-style-type: none">asas ifas thoughin a wayin the wayjust aslikemuch asthe way listing words <ul style="list-style-type: none">first/firstlyfurthermoreabove allmoreoversecondlyfinally/lastlylast but not leastnextthirdlyone/two/threeto begin with ... |
|--|--|---|--|

You've got a dirty mark **on** your jumper.

He had a large spot **on** his nose.

She placed her hand **on** my shoulder.

• **With roads/streets, or other things that can be thought of as a line, e.g.: rivers:**

Debbie lives **on** Croft Lane.

The bank is **on** the corner of King's Street.

Koblenz is **on** the Rhine.

Bournemouth is **on** the south coast.

It's the second turning **on** the left.

The preposition **in** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

• **With cities, towns and larger areas:**

Do you like living **in** Nottingham?

They were having a picnic **in** the park.

She works somewhere **in** the toy department.

• **With buildings/rooms and places that can be thought of as surrounding a person or object on all sides:**

Can you take a seat **in** the waiting room please?

I've left my bag **in** the office.

There's a wedding **in** the church this afternoon.

Lots of people were swimming **in** the lake.

| NOUNS and PREPOSITIONS | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| approval of | concern for | fondness for | hope for | need for | respect for |
| awareness of | confusion about | grasp of | interest in | participation in | success in |
| belief in | desire for | hatred of | love of | reason for | understanding of |
| ADJECTIVES and PREPOSITIONS | | | | | |
| afraid of | capable of | fond of | jealous of | proud of | sure of |
| angry at | careless about | happy about | made of | similar to | tired of |
| aware of | familiar with | interested in | married to | sorry for | worried about |
| VERBS and PREPOSITIONS | | | | | |
| apologize for | bring up | grow up | make up | study for | trust in |
| ask about | care for | look for | pay for | talk about | work for |
| ask for | find out | look forward | prepare for | think about | worry about |
| belong to | give up | to look up | | | |

CONJUNCTIONS AND LINKING WORDS

A conjunction is a word that is used to connect sentences, clauses and phrases. With the help of conjunctions, you can vary the length of sentences in your writing, which will make your writing more interesting and easier to read.

It is important to link words and phrases to integrate them into cohesive writing. The following words and phrases can be used to connect pieces of information in your writing.

Coordinating and Subordinating Conjunctions

Some conjunctions are used simply to join or coordinate clauses, for example, and, but, or, so. Look at the following example sentences:-

We are going to the cinema **and** spending an evening at the opera.

The lending library closes at 7pm, **but** the reading rooms stay open until 9pm.

Other conjunctions, however, are used to subordinate one clause (the subclause) to the other (the main clause). The following pairs of sentences illustrate the difference between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions:-

- **With specific times of day, or mealtimes:**

He doesn't like driving **at** night.

I'll go shopping **at** lunchtime.

I like to read the children a story **at** bedtime.

- **In certain fixed expressions which refer to specific points in time:**

Are you leaving **at** the weekend?*

She's working **at** the moment.

He's unavailable **at** present.

I'll finish the course **at** the end of April.

We arrived **at** the same time.

**Note that in American English, on the weekend is the correct form.

The preposition **in** is used in the following descriptions of time:

- **With months, years, seasons, and longer periods of time:**

I was born **in** 1965.

We're going to visit them **in** May.

The pool is closed **in** winter.

He was famous **in** the 1980's.

The play is set **in** the Middle Ages.

They've done work for me **in** the past.

- **With periods of time during the day:**

He's leaving **in** the morning.

She usually has a sleep **in** the afternoon(s).

I tried to work **in** the evening.

- **To describe the amount of time needed to do something:**

They managed to finish the job **in** two weeks.

You can travel there and back **in** a day.

- **To indicate when something will happen in the future:**

She'll be ready **in** a few minutes.

He's gone away but he'll be back **in** a couple of days.

The preposition **on** is used in the following descriptions of time:

- **With days of the week, and parts of days of the week:**

I'll see you **on** Friday.

She usually works **on** Mondays.

We're going to the theatre **on** Wednesday evening.

(Note that in spoken English, **on** is often omitted in this context, e.g.: I'll see you Friday.)

- **With dates:**

The interview is **on** 29th April.

He was born **on** February 14th 1995.

2 Prepositions of place

The preposition **at** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

- **With specific places/points in space:**

Angie's still **at** home.

I'll meet you **at** reception.

There's a man **at** the door.

I saw her standing **at** the bus stop.

Turn right **at** the traffic lights.

The index is **at** the back of the book.

Write your name **at** the top of each page.

- **With public places and shops:**

Jane's **at** the dentist/hairdresser.

I studied German **at** college/school/university.

Shall I meet you **at** the station?

We bought some bread **at** the supermarket.

- **With addresses:**

They live **at** 70, Duncombe Place.

- **With events:**

I met her **at** last year's conference.

She wasn't **at** Simon's party.

The preposition **on** is used in the following descriptions of place/position:

- **With surfaces, or things that can be thought of as surfaces:**

The letter is **on** my desk.

There was a beautiful painting **on** the wall.

The toy department is **on** the first floor.

Write the number down **on** a piece of paper.

